

### **AMENDMENTS TO THE CLAIMS**

1. (currently amended) A device for enclosing spliced cables, comprising:  
  
a container having an opening, an inside surface, and an outside surface;  
  
protective matter disposed inside said container;  
  
a splice-supporting member being receivable through said opening of said container such that a cable splice supported on one end of said member may be inserted into said container through said opening and thus immersed in said protective matter; said splice-supporting member further defining at least one passageway therethrough for the receipt of cables; and

a locking mechanism for preventing withdrawal of said member from said container, said mechanism comprising a protrusion which is received in a channel; one of said protrusion and channel being defined by an outside surface of said member, the other of said protrusion and channel being defined by an inside surface of said container, said protrusion having a gradually-sloped face on a first side and a barrier face on a second side; said gradually-sloped face engaging a gradual dropoff face on a first side of said channel, and said barrier face engaging a steeply rising face on said second side of said channel when a user attempts to remove the member from said container.

2. (original) The device of claim 1 wherein said container is substantially cylindrical and said protrusion extends annularly inward from the inside surface of the container.

3. (original) The device of claim 2 wherein said protrusion is defined by said inside surface of said container so as to be substantially annular within the container.

4. (original) The device of claim 3 wherein said protrusion has a wave-shaped cross section.

5. (original) The device of claim 1 wherein said channel is defined by a portion of the outside surface of said member, said outside surface of said member slidably receivable by said inside surface of said container.

6. (original) The device of claim 5 wherein said channel is formed as a partial annular rib about the portion of the outside surface of said member.

7. (original) The device of claim 6 wherein said channel has a wave-shaped cross section.

8. (cancelled)

9. (original) The device of claim 1 further comprising:

an additional protrusion which is received in an additional channel; one of said additional protrusion and additional channel being defined by an outside surface of said member, the other of said additional protrusion and additional channel being defined by an inside surface of said container.

10. (original) The device of claim 9 further comprising:

a third protrusion which is received in a third channel; one of said third protrusion and third channel being defined by an outside surface of said member, the other of said third protrusion and third channel being defined by an inside surface of said container.

11. A protective enclosure comprising:

a member having first and second ends;

said first end having a substantially cylindrical outside surface and defining at least two cable-receiving axial passageways therethrough; said second end adapted to support a splice thereon;

a substantially tubular container with closed and open ends;

said open end adapted to receive said splice-supporting second end and then engage said substantially cylindrical outside surface of said first end to substantially plug said container; and

an annular rib which is received in an annular channel; one of said rib and channel being defined by an outside surface of said member, the other of said rib and channel being defined by an inside surface of said container, said rib having a gradually-sloped face on one side and a barrier face on another side, said channel having a gradual dropoff on one side which engages said gradually sloped face when said member is received into said container, said channel also having a steep rise on another side which engages said barrier face when a user attempts to remove the member from said container.

12. The device of claim 11 wherein said rib extends inward from the inside surface of the container.

13. The device of claim 12 wherein said rib is defined by said inside surface of said container so as to be annular within the container.

14. The device of claim 13 wherein said rib has a wave-shaped cross section.

15. The device of claim 14 wherein said channel is defined by a portion of the outside surface of said member, said outside surface of said member slidably receivable by said inside surface of said container.

16. The device of claim 15 wherein said channel is formed as a partial annular ring about the portion of the outside surface of said member.

17. The device of claim 16 wherein said channel has a wave-shaped cross section.

18. (cancelled)

19. The device of claim 11 further comprising:

an additional rib which is received in an additional channel; one of said additional rib and additional channel being defined by an outside surface of said member, the other of said additional rib and additional channel being defined by an inside surface of said container.

20. The device of claim 19 further comprising:

a third rib which is received in a third channel; one of said third rib and third channel being defined by an outside surface of said member, the other of said third rib and third channel being defined by an inside surface of said container.

21. (new) A protective enclosure comprising:

a member having first and second ends;

said first end having a substantially cylindrical outside surface and adapted to allow the introduction of cable therethrough for the purpose of enabling a splice inside the enclosure;

a substantially tubular container with closed and open ends;

said open end adapted to receive said second end of said member and also engage said substantially cylindrical outside surface of said first end to substantially plug said container; and

an annular rib which is received in an annular channel; one of said rib and channel being defined by an outside surface of said member, the other of said rib and channel being defined by an inside surface of said container said rib having an offset-shark-toothed cross section which makes said rib receivable into and lockable within said channel which has a reciprocating cross-sectional shape.

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